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SPAIN

By

H. THOMAS

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## SHAKESPEARE AND SPAIN

I HAVE entitled this lecture 'Shakespeare and Spain', but I shall deal with one side only of the suggested subject, Spain's influence in Shakespeare, leaving to others the question of Shakespeare's influence in Spain. I am conscious that I have chosen the lesser part, and in the end I shall concur with your criticism that a more fitting title would have been one which Shakespeare himself has provided ready to hand—*Much Ado about Nothing*—for I am on the side of those who think that Spain's direct influence in Shakespeare is small.

That is perhaps the general view among such as have given no special consideration to the matter. Eminent scholars hold widely differing opinions. On the one hand, Mr. Aubrey Bell boldly speaks of the Spanish language 'which Shakespeare seems to have known well', and he continues: 'Several Shakespeare plays were derived from Spanish sources, and one, *The Tempest*, followed very closely on the publication of its Spanish source. Shakespeare's allusions to Spain are very numerous, he uses Spanish phrases and gives an English garb to others.' On the other hand, Professor Fitzmaurice-Kelly cautiously admits: 'There are in Shakespeare a few touches which, with a little goodwill, may be taken as implying some acquaintance, however slight, with Spanish. It is conceivable that Shakespeare contrived to plod through some of the Spanish books which were reprinted in the Netherlands and brought thence to England; some such supposition is almost unavoidable if we choose to accept Dorer's well-known theory that *The Tempest* derives from Antonio de Esclava's *Noches de Invierno*. Were this so—the theory is not received with universal favour—we should have to assume either that Shakespeare knew enough Spanish to pick out the plot of a story from



a Spanish work, or that there existed in Shakespeare's time some French or English version, no longer known, of Eslava's dreary book.'

Those quotations represent very divergent views ; but however opinions may differ, it is common ground that Shakespeare had some knowledge of Spain and the Spaniards, that a few Spanish words were among his stock-in-trade, and that he incurred certain small obligations to Spanish literature. These topics I propose to examine, with special reference to recent investigations which would make Shakespeare's knowledge of and indebtedness to Spain far greater than even Mr. Bell allows. The temporary lull in Shakespeare study due to the war affords an opportunity to review suggestions and theories which have not yet had a chance of passing through the gateway of general criticism into the realm of accepted doctrine or the limbo of rejection.

The extent of an author's acquaintance with the language of a foreign country is obviously an important factor in considering the possible influences exercised upon him by that country's literature. None of the known facts of Shakespeare's life would lead us to suppose that he had natural opportunities of acquiring Spanish, as he certainly had of acquiring French. We must turn for information to the evidence of his literary work.

As Mr. Bell says, Shakespeare 'uses Spanish phrases'. I have carefully read through Shakespeare's works in recent years, and I only find two such phrases, both of a popular character. As to the Spanish phrases to which he 'gives an English garb', I confess that I have recognized none of them, and I await enlightenment. I have, however, noted three or four words which are or may be Spanish, and which must have been on most men's lips in Shakespeare's day. I have also collected several instances of words derived from the Spanish or showing Spanish influence ; but these are not of Shakespeare's own coining : they were current in the language of the time, and no one man's property more than another's.



The linguistic evidence, at any rate, hardly supports Mr. Bell's statement that Spanish was a language 'which Shakespeare seems to have known well'. How far is the further statement justified, that 'Shakespeare's allusions to Spain are very numerous'? If we were to understand Spain here simply in a geographical sense, it would be easy to prove the exact opposite; but no doubt the word is used to cover Spanish characters and Spanish commodities as well. The latter may be considered first. Falstaff's 'good bilbo' is just a variant of the 'sword of Spain', the 'Spanish sword', and the 'Spanish blade', met with elsewhere; all of which merely show that the Spanish sword had penetrated the English as well as the other markets of the world. So too had the wines of the Peninsula: the nondescript bastard, besides the canaries, charneco, and sherris, or sherris-sack, or simple ubiquitous sack, which produced the comfortable 'Spanish pouch', as Prince Henry calls it. But Shakespeare knew more about the properties of these wines than about their place of origin. Mistress Quickly was not alone in thinking canaries 'a marvellous searching wine', that 'perfumes the blood ere one can say "What's this?"' Nor is it a second-hand panegyric of sherris-sack that is put into Falstaff's mouth:

'A good sherris-sack hath a two-fold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish and dull and crudy vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble fiery and delectable shapes; which, delivered o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is, the warming of the blood; which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice; but the sherris warms it and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extreme: it illumineth the face, which as a beacon gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm; and then the vital commoners and inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart, who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage; and this valour comes

of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work ; and learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till sack commences it and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant ; for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath, like lean, sterile and bare land, manured, husbanded and tilled with excellent endeavour of drinking good and good store of fertile sherris, that he is become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first humane principle I would teach them should be, to forswear thin potations and to addict themselves to sack.'

A strong personal note rings in the finale.

In addition to these swords and wines, another Spanish product is alluded to in Beatrice's remark 'civil as an orange', and the mere possibility of this pun on Seville being made from the stage shows that the Spanish fruit was as well known in England as the Spanish wines—then as now. In short, Shakespeare reveals the knowledge of Spanish commodities that one would expect of the average Englishman ; he is only above the average in his power of expressing his appreciation of them.

We shall find that Shakespeare's references to the country itself reveal a similar state of knowledge. The members of his audiences who did not know that Julius Caesar 'had a fever when he was in Spain' were not necessarily ignorant of Spain ; they simply had not read or misread or enlarged on Plutarch. And those who were unaware that John of Gaunt 'did subdue the greatest part of Spain' were better informed than they perhaps imagined. These statements, however, occur in historical plays, and, in the sphere of history, imagination and patriotism traditionally enjoy great licence. It is to the comedies that we look for real evidence as to Shakespeare's knowledge of the Peninsula.

No one has suggested that Shakespeare ever went to Spain, and it is simply the general verdict of travellers that is crystallized in his description 'tawny Spain'. He displays indeed a greater knowledge of Spain than some of his modern editors, when he makes Helena a 'Saint



Jacques' pilgrim', 'to great Saint Jacques bound'; but no one in his day would fail to take the reference to the great mediaeval pilgrimage to the shrine of the apostle Saint James in Santiago de Compostela. It is certainly less Shakespeare's interest in the neighbouring country of Portugal than his memory of recent events and his familiarity with seafaring men that is responsible for Beatrice's simile: 'My affection hath an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal.' The apparently unusual expression 'the bay of Portugal' is said to be still current among sailors to denote the deep waters that wash the nose and brow of Portugal, while a disastrous English expedition to that country, the year after the Armada, may have made the allusion worth while. Shakespeare's acquaintance with the affairs of the sea, again, no doubt leads to the bare inclusion of Lisbon among the places whither Antonio has ventured his argosies; while this short list gains nothing from the mention of Aragon in *Much Ado about Nothing*, for it is simply due to the fact that Don Pedro of Aragon is one of the principal characters in the play, and he, with the whole plot, was taken over by Shakespeare from a source which goes back to Bandello.

As far as he reveals himself in his geographical references, then, Shakespeare has no special knowledge of the Peninsula; but the evidence by which we have to judge him is limited, and we may be allowed to extend it by including his references to Spanish characters.

We may ignore three unnamed Spanish characters introduced merely to add local colour or to appeal to national prejudice. Such touches show that Shakespeare knew, not so much the Peninsula, as his audiences. Yet he came into contact with real Spanish personages in two of his historical plays. The Lady Blanch of Spain, daughter of Alphonso VIII of Castile by Eleanor, sister of King John of England, figures in *King John*; but in this play Shakespeare was simply revising the work of an anonymous predecessor. In *King Henry VIII* several Spanish characters are mentioned: Queen Katharine, her father Ferdinand



the Catholic, and her 'royal nephew' the emperor Charles V, whose abdication is thought by some to have revived an interest in the story of King Lear in England. These characters, however, only enter into *King Henry VIII* through the medium of the English chronicles on which the play is based; they imply no special interest in Spanish history. Moreover, Shakespeare is only partly responsible for *King Henry VIII*. No doubt he was attracted by the moving story of Queen Katharine, but in view of the usual division of the play among possible collaborators, it would be going too far to attribute the sympathetic treatment of this stranger queen to him, uninfluenced by the aftermath of war; otherwise we might have conceived Shakespeare as working here on the same serene level as Cervantes, who drew so friendly a picture of Queen Elizabeth in *La Española Inglesa*, and we might have contrasted both with the intensely patriotic Lope de Vega, who paints the virgin queen in his *Dragontea* as 'the Scarlet Lady of Babylon'.

At the best, *King John* and *King Henry VIII* only throw light on the information respecting historic Spanish characters which Shakespeare derived from books. We must turn to the comedies if we wish to discover anything concerning his personal knowledge of Spaniards, whom he had no lack of opportunity to study in London itself. The expression 'a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet,' was doubtless based on personal observation of cloaked figures in the capital, and he may have drawn inspiration from one or two prominent Spaniards resident there in his day. The incentive to write *The Merchant of Venice* was perhaps provided by the anti-semitic wave that followed the sensational case of the court physician, Rodrigo Lopez, a Portuguese Jew by birth, though nominally a Christian, who was suspected of attempting to poison Queen Elizabeth. Political bias and religious prejudice amply confirming this suspicion, the unhappy man was hanged at Tyburn, where he had the additional misfortune of earning the derision of the mob by protesting that 'he loved

the queen as well as he loved Jesus Christ', which, as Camden tells us, 'from a man of the Jewish profession moved no small laughter in the standers-by'. To Mr. Martin Hume indeed, amongst other possible hints from Lopez's case, his 'sanctimonious expressions during his trial and execution would seem to suggest Antonio's words of Shylock—"the devil can cite Scripture for his purpose".' But Antonio's comment follows as naturally on Shylock's Old Testament illustration, 'When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep', as that illustration arises in the context; and Mr. Hume himself would not carry the parallel too far. Shakespeare, being an artist, certainly left any direct suggestion of a particular figure to the cruder capacities of the actors.

Rodrigo Lopez had served as interpreter to Antonio Perez, formerly Secretary of State to Philip II, and afterwards his enemy. Perez had been brought to England in 1593 by Lord Essex, and utilized to counter Spanish influences, and the court physician was suspected of conspiring to poison Perez, as well as the queen, as part of a Spanish intrigue. It seems probable that Shakespeare had Perez in his mind's eye when remodelling the Braggart of the earlier *Love's Labour's Lost* as the fantastical Spaniard Don Adriano de Armado. Mr. Hume finds confirmation of this in the correspondence in styles between Perez's letters and Armado's speeches, and he calls attention to Perez's favourite pseudonym 'el peregrino' and that most singular and choice epithet 'too peregrinate', applied to Don Adriano by Holofernes. Don Adriano's style, both in his speeches and in his letters, is at the most a very free parody of Perez's, and it is doubtfully that, for any hints taken from Perez would be superimposed on the original sketch of the Braggart, and this clearly owed something to an eccentric Italian well known in London for his strange talk some years before, the 'Phantasticall Monarke' whose 'epitaphe' appears in Churchyard's *Chance* (1580).

But we are not called upon to test the precise degree of

truth underlying these possible reflexions of contemporary figures in Shakespeare's plays. However interesting in themselves, they do not point to his having enjoyed any personal intimacy with Spaniards in London, and discussion of them is only necessary in order to avoid overlooking any evidence as to his knowledge of Spain and of Spanish.

We may summarize the results of the evidence so far collected, before passing on to the question of Shakespeare's literary borrowings from the Peninsula. Shakespeare's knowledge of Spain seems to have been that of the intelligent London citizen. He was vaguely familiar with a few historic Spanish figures, but his information concerning them was derived from English chronicles, and in itself did not particularly interest him. If he suggests acquaintance with living Spaniards, it is apparently a distant one, and throws no light on the possibility of his naturally acquiring Spanish; and the knowledge he displays of that tongue is no more than we should expect if he had 'been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps'.

We can now consider without prejudice Shakespeare's literary indebtedness to the Peninsula. What we have seen above merely warns us not to assume that Shakespeare was so familiar with Spanish that he would regularly turn to Spanish books and read them fluently and freely. We must be on our guard too against drawing rash conclusions from similarities of plot, incident, thought, or expression in Shakespeare and in Spanish literature. The great defect of the diligent source-hunter is that he so often finds what he looks for, and Shakespeare's versatile mind and fertile imagination have provided abundant scope for his activities.

It has for some time been on record that Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and *Twelfth Night* deal respectively with the same subjects as Lope de Rueda's *Comedia Eufemia* and *Comedia de los Engañados*, and his *Romeo and Juliet* with the same theme as Lope de Vega's *Castelvines y Monteses*.



Recently *Pericles*, which is partly Shakespeare's work, has been similarly brought into line with Gil Vicente's *Comedia de Rubena*. These are isolated facts. Shakespeare drew from the same sources as the Spanish dramatists; it is not suggested that he utilized their plays.

But there are subtler parallels between Shakespeare and Spanish literature, which, from the fact that no conscious relationship is claimed for the authors in question, serve to emphasize the danger of inferring too much from such resemblances. Professor Fitzmaurice-Kelly, besides quoting the familiar coincidence of expression whereby both Hamlet and Don Quixote state that the purpose of the drama is 'to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to Nature', gives a more illuminating instance of his own: the picture of two parallel creations, Falstaff and Sancho, pursuing similar thoughts to the same conclusion, Falstaff by the King's camp near Shrewsbury soliloquizing on honour and deciding 'I'll have none of it', and Sancho under a tree outside El Toboso, reflecting on the doubtful advantages of faithful service, and concluding that 'the devil, the devil, and no one else, dragged me into this affair'. These are chance resemblances of thought and expression arising out of analogous situations, such as will frequently be found in writers like Shakespeare and Cervantes, whose minds range widely over life's activities. Christopher Sly's sudden elevation to the peerage—though the theme is not developed—recalls Sancho Panza's promotion to be governor of Barataria, and Petruchio and his horse on their way to the wedding suggest Don Quixote and Rozinante prepared for equally perilous adventures. Falstaff's threat to toss the rogue Pistol in a blanket shows that Sancho's unlucky experience might have befallen him just as easily in an English inn as in a Spanish one. Polonius in proverbial mood is reminiscent of Sancho, while Edgar, the fool, and King Lear, and Hamlet himself, vie with the Licenciado Vidriera for 'matter and impertinency mixed, reason in madness'.

But we are not limited to Cervantes, nor to situation,

thought, and expression, for parallels. In method, too, Shakespeare has Spanish counterparts. The picture of Launcelot Gobbo, holding the balance between the fiend and his conscience as to whether he shall run away from the Jew his master, has its exact parallel in the *Celestina*, though in this case Sempronio decides to remain with the love-struck Calisto. Shakespeare and the unknown author of the *Celestina* had unerring instincts for the drama of irresolution, which is almost the very negation of drama, and so one of its subtlest forms.

In style, too, Shakespeare strangely recalls past vogues in Spanish literature. Don Quixote delighted in Feliciano de Silva's long-winded romances of chivalry for their lucidity of style, and especially for such complicated conceits as 'the reason of the unreason with which my reason is afflicted so weakens my reason that with reason I murmur at your beauty', which were as pearls in his sight. He would have been equally dazzled by Romeo's 'O single-soled jest, solely singular for thy singleness!' and Richard the Second's

Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down.  
My care is loss of care, by old care done;  
Your care is gain of care, by new care won.  
The cares I give I have, though given away;  
They tend the crown, yet still with me they stay;

while the poor gentleman might well have lain awake trying to unravel the carefully plaited reasoning of Cardinal Pandulph in *King John*. In spite of the warning against affectation which he puts in Hamlet's mouth, Shakespeare could serve 'a very fantastical banquet' of words, 'just so many strange dishes' as there were tastes, with the result that critics have recognized his gongorism before ever gongorism was.

All parallels between Shakespeare and Spanish romances of chivalry are particularly instructive in view of recent attempts to increase the English dramatist's indebtedness to these generally tedious books. As we shall see shortly, Shakespeare gives apparent evidence of knowing two of

them. At present, however, I wish to emphasize how easy it was for parallels to exist, without his having any acquaintance with the Spanish romances themselves. By his day, these books had been extensively printed in the Peninsula for nearly a century; through the medium of translations they had exercised a considerable influence elsewhere in Europe for half a century; and after such a lapse of time whatever was digestible in them had been absorbed and was circulating unidentified and unidentifiable in the general organization. Moreover they brought back to England little that had not come out of the country. England had its own romances of chivalry of older date; English history had been moulded by their spirit, and in many ways the native chronicles approximated all too closely to the romances. When Shakespeare quotes a hero of chivalry, he chooses an English one: Sir Guy or Sir Colbrand or Sir Bevis. Chivalry had become an essential part of English life; its themes and terms had saturated through to the lower classes. After the ignominious rout of himself and his companions by the phantom host whose nucleus was the Prince and Poins, Falstaff shelters himself from open shame behind a mediaeval notion vulgarized by the romances of chivalry: 'Was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules; but beware instinct: *the lion will not touch the true prince.*' And chivalresque remarks are bandied round in Falstaff's rascally circles. To Falstaff, the red-nosed Bardolph is the 'Knight of the Burning Lamp', and Pistol a 'base Assyrian knight', while by a degrading extension Doll Tearsheet is to the beadle a 'she knight-errant'. It need not surprise us therefore to find in Shakespeare things that would be quite in place in a Spanish romance of chivalry, such as the boy that King Henry the Fifth and Katharine are to compound, 'that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard', or Othello's bitter cry, 'O the world hath not a sweeter creature; she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks.'



Hector's challenge in *Troilus and Cressida* is pure romantic chivalry : he will make good

He hath a lady, wiser, fairer, truer,  
Than ever Greek did compass in his arms,

in lists that are frankly mediaeval :

If any come, Hector shall honour him ;  
If none, he'll say in Troy when he retires,  
The Grecian dames are sunburnt and not worth  
The splinter of a lance.

The mechanism of chivalry is of course present in the historical plays ; it sometimes gives way to that of chivalresque romance. Talbot in battle is a very hero of romance ; but he occurs in a play with which Shakespeare may have had little or no connexion. It is otherwise with *Cymbeline*, which is sprinkled with the commonplaces of chivalresque romance superbly told : the kidnapping of the King's two sons from the nursery ; the unfolding of their royal qualities in spite of their rustic training ; their impatience when danger threatens ; their defeat of the conquering Romans, with their foster-father's help ; their knighthood after the battle, and the subsequent discovery of their royal origin : these were hackneyed themes among the later romance-writers ; they were common property in Shakespeare's time, and we need not try to connect *Cymbeline* with any particular romance of chivalry, though this has recently been attempted. The vague parallels that have been pointed out above will warn us not only to scrutinize narrowly any claims that Shakespeare borrowed incidents or expressions from Spanish literature, but to view them broadly too.

If all the claims could be substantiated which have been made in the present century alone, then Shakespeare was widely read in Spanish literature : he was familiar, through representative books, with the principal developments in early Spanish prose fiction, the didactic anecdote, the chivalresque romance, the sentimental tale, the realistic novel, the pastoral romance, and the picaresque story. The alleged evidence on which these claims are based varies from casual

reminiscences to profuse borrowings. The latter are confined to the pastoral and the chivalresque romances; the consideration of them may be deferred while we deal with the minor cases.

The earliest Spanish work that has been connected with Shakespeare is the *Conde Lucanor*, the fourteenth-century collection of apologues by Don Juan Manuel, which was first published in 1575. One of the stories told in the *Conde Lucanor*, obviously taken from an oriental source, has a similar theme to *The Taming of the Shrew*, and as late as 1909 Mr. Martin Hume was still claiming that the Shakespearian play was derived from the Spanish story. Those who have not his reason for bias will recognize the theme of both as a widespread folk-lore motive, and will simply regard the Spanish story as an interesting Shakespeare parallel. We do seem to be remotely indebted to a Spaniard for the induction to the play, a European variant—since it is based on intoxication—of another oriental motive: in whatever way the jest of ‘the waking man’s dream’ came to be utilized on the English stage, its appearance in Europe has been traced to a letter of Juan Luis Vives, who reports it as having been practised on a drunken artisan by Philip the Good of Burgundy. Shakespeare, however, is as distantly related to Vives as he is to Don Juan Manuel, for in the induction, as in the play itself, he was merely retouching an already existing *Pleasant Conceited Historie*, based on versions of the two themes involved which were already current in this country.

It is but a vague suggestion that would bring Shakespeare into relationship with a more famous example of early Spanish fiction, the *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*, usually known as the *Celestina*. Professor Fitzmaurice-Kelly, who cannot be accused of rashness in these matters, thinks that the English version of the first four acts of this realistic novel in dialogue, made by Sir Thomas More’s brother-in-law John Rastell, and printed by him about 1530, may have contributed something to the conception

of the two immortal lovers Romeo and Juliet, and he stresses the fact that, according to the *Stationers' Register*, there was projected a London edition of the *Celestina* in Spanish about the time when Shakespeare was preparing his play. Shakespeare may have known of the project, and something of the nature of the book, from those interested; but he had ample sources of inspiration for Romeo and Juliet in his English predecessors in the same field, Brooke and Painter. The suggested influence of the *Celestina*, while unnecessary and unprovable, remains within the realm of possibility. It involves no knowledge of Spanish on Shakespeare's part. Not so a rash attempt recently made to connect Shakespeare with Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda Celestina*, in which Dr. Joseph de Perott, a scholar in the United States, finds a parallel to the hiding of Falstaff in a buck-basket at Mistress Ford's house in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. A Portuguese girl in the *Celestina*'s house receives a visit by appointment from a Trinitarian friar whom she has captivated by her beauty; they are interrupted by the girl's jealous and ferocious lover, and the friar is only saved from destruction by being concealed in a huge pitcher of water. Dr. Perott convinces himself that Shakespeare copied this incident, because he also finds in the *Segunda Celestina* the original of Falstaff, a serving-man equally boastful, equally white-livered in the presence of danger, and equally facile in converting a taunt to his credit; one of whose speeches might be headed, in Falstaff's words, 'the better part of valour is discretion'. Dr. Perott also sees in this man's master, a young lordling of affected speech, the germ of Don Adriano de Armado. Those who are not intent on finding a Spanish source for everything Shakespeare wrote will not readily share Dr. Perott's conviction. As we have seen, Shakespeare had models for Don Adriano in London itself. Further, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was made for Falstaff, and not Falstaff for *The Merry Wives*; he developed in the historical dramas, and is just a supreme example of an ancient literary type. Again, the concealment of the clan-



destine lover nowhere depends on written authority, and the creator of Falstaff had no need to look to Spain for the simple practical jokes played on his hero; if he had been under any such necessity, popular Spanish literature would have provided him with something much nearer to the buck-basket incident than the *Segunda Celestina* offers.

Dr. Perott is almost as reckless in trying to bring Shakespeare into association with Juan de Flores' *Historia de Grisel y Mirabella*, a representative of the sentimental tales that developed in Spain about the time the *Celestina* was written and printed. Published in English abroad in 1556, and at home thirty years later, as *The History of Aurelio and Isabella*, this story may well have been known to Shakespeare—it is known to Shakespearians as having been at one time, under a complete misapprehension, regarded as the source of *The Tempest*. Briefly, it relates the secret love-intrigue of the knight Grisel and the princess Mirabella, revealed by a servant to her father, the King of Scotland. According to the law of the country, whichever of the pair gave the other the greatest cause for love was to suffer death, and this other lifelong banishment. The difficult question as to which was the guiltier party was argued at great length, and the lady finally condemned. Dr. Perott regards this story as having influenced Shakespeare in *Measure for Measure*, because here the same law prevails in Vienna, and he is absolutely convinced by the Duke's remark to Juliet in prison :

Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.

Not being bound to find Spanish influence in *Measure for Measure*, we may treat the Duke's remark in relation to its context. In his pretended character of a friar, the Duke tells the penitent Juliet :

I'll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience,  
And try your penitence, if it be sound,  
Or hollowly put on.

He then brings her to confess she loves the man who wronged her, so that their 'most offenceful act was

mutually committed'. It is robbing Shakespeare of his insight, and the Duke's remark of its subtlety, to pretend that the conclusion, 'Then was your sin of heavier kind than his', was inspired by the *Historia de Grisel y Mirabella*. But Dr. Perott had already blinded himself by identifying the ordinary law of Vienna, by which the man forfeited his life for immorality, while the woman was let off lightly, with the exceptional law of Scotland, by which the guilty woman died. As a matter of fact, neither the general plot nor the particular situations of *Measure for Measure* bear any relation to the *Historia de Grisel y Mirabella*; as is well known, Shakespeare followed closely George Whetstone's play *Promos and Cassandra* of 1578.

After these strained comparisons, it is a relief to return to a modest suggestion that Shakespeare may have known the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes*, with which the picaresque story began in Spain about the middle of the sixteenth century, and of which two or three editions appeared in English during the last quarter of that century. A passage in *Much Ado about Nothing*, 'Ho! now you strike like the blind man: 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post,' is said to recall the incident in *Lazarillo de Tormes* which terminated the youthful hero's service with his first master. He stole a piece of sausage from the blind man, and was well beaten for the offence. In revenge, he induced his master to jump across a stream head first into a stone pillar. The master is stunned, and the boy runs away from him for good. The main elements in these two cases are so similar that the above passage in Shakespeare will certainly recall the incident in *Lazarillo de Tormes* to those who have read the Spanish story. These elements, however, must formerly have occurred in conjunction often enough in real life, and the circumstances in the two cases we are considering are so different that it is reasonably certain Shakespeare was not alluding to *Lazarillo de Tormes*, but to some anecdote or incident better known to his audiences.

We reach the literature of Shakespeare's own time in

Mr. Martin Hume's claim that the dramatist was indebted to Juan Huarte's *Examen de Ingenios*, which appeared in English in 1594 and at later dates. We are told that 'this book was a very remarkable one, for it formulated a new theory of sanity, talent and madness'—sanity being the result of an equilibrium of the four humours. Of this new theory, however, Mr. Hume finds 'no traces in Shakespeare's studies of mental alienation, but that the great dramatist must have read Huarte in the translation of his friend, Carew, is obvious to any one who will read Nym's quaint talk about "humours" in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and the speech of the bastard, Edmund, in "King Lear", where he states the reasons for the mental and physical superiority of illegitimately-born children over those born in wedlock.' 'As the speech and Huarte's original are somewhat coarse', Mr. Hume refrained from quoting, and he was as discreet as he was delicate, for quotation would have revealed the fact that the indignant protest of one who 'stood in the plague of custom' had nothing in common with the cold reasoning of the scientist, except the commonplace error concerning the superiority of the love-child. As to Nym's 'quaint talk about humours', Mr. Hume must have forgotten Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, in which Shakespeare had acted; he certainly overlooked the induction to *Every Man out of his Humour*, or he would have realized that Nym's nonsensical remarks had nothing to do with Juan Huarte, but were simply another attempt

To give these ignorant well-spoken days  
Some taste of their abuse of this word humour.

The last of these minor cases—minor only because of the obscurity that surrounds it—is the most interesting of all, for it involves the possibility of Shakespeare having come under the influence of Cervantes. Parallels between the two we have already seen, but they remain parallels and nothing more. The one chance of connecting them more closely depends on the evidence of a lost play, *The*



*History of Cardenio*, mentioned in the *Stationers' Register* under the late date 1653, though perhaps identical with a play performed forty years earlier. If the *Stationers' Register* is correct in ascribing this play to 'Mr. Fletcher and Shakespeare', then the latter must have known and used *Don Quixote*—which he might have read in Shelton's version—for *The History of Cardenio* could hardly fail to unfold the entangled love-stories of Cardenio and the Lady Luscinda, and Don Fernando and the fair Dorothea, whom the Knight met in the Sierra Morena. We have no means of judging the question, and so we cannot definitely say that Shakespeare knew Cervantes, yet he supplemented, unconsciously and not unworthily, the portrait which Cervantes drew of himself in the preface to his *Novelas Exemplares*, and certainly more than one Spanish Desdemona was captivated by the tale

of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe  
And sold to slavery.

In the above chronological *résumé* the discussion of Shakespeare's relationship to the Spanish pastoral and chivalresque romances has been deferred, because in both cases we are on firmer ground. The pastoral romance was of course not originally Spanish, but it was popularized in the Peninsula and elsewhere by Jorge de Montemór's *Diana*. It has long been acknowledged that Shakespeare was in some way indebted to the *Diana* for part of the plot of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*: Proteus' wooing of Julia by letter, with the maid Lucetta as intermediary; Julia's coquetting with the letter; Proteus' departure for the Court, followed by Julia in male attire; Julia's stay at the inn, and overhearing Proteus serenade another mistress; her service with him as a page, and employment to further his new suit; the recognition in a forest, after a scene of combat. All this is simply the story of Felix and Felismena in the second book of the *Diana*. Shakespeare

may have taken it from a lost play, *The History of Felix and Philismena*, acted at Court in 1584; but there are points which suggest that he may have known the romance: the outlaw Valerius may be called after Valerio, the name adopted by Felismena when she turned page; and the magic juice which Puck sprinkled on his victims' eyes in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* may have been suggested by the *Diana*. Even so, Shakespeare need not have had to read the romance in the original Spanish. The book seems to have been popular with translators since Barnaby Googe published a fragment from the Felix and Felismena episode in English verse three years after the appearance of the original. Bartholomew Young translated the whole work by 1582, though his version was not printed till 1598, after the date assigned to *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and Shakespeare may have known the story from a manuscript copy, or from accounts given him by friends. We know, however, from Bartholomew Young himself, that others had translated the *Diana*. Among them was Sir Thomas Wilson, who translated the work in 1596, dedicating it to Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton. Later he could only find his copy of the first book, and it would be tempting to think that Shakespeare used, and retained, the second and later books, if the critics were not fairly well agreed that *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* belonged to the earlier nineties. In any case, there seems to have been material enough in English on which Shakespeare could draw.

The case is different with regard to some of the Spanish romances of chivalry which have recently been much advertised as sources of Shakespeare's plays. Over a century ago, Robert Southey, fixing on the name Florizel in *The Winter's Tale*, observed that Shakespeare in this play imitated *Amadis de Grecia*—one of Feliciano de Silva's continuations of the famous romance *Amadis de Gaula*—which was not translated into English till 1693. Southey had in mind those scenes in which Prince Florizel, 'obscured with a swain's wearing', woos Perdita, just as his namesake in *Amadis de Grecia* turns shepherd

to court the temporary shepherdess Silvia. The general plot of *The Winter's Tale*, including the pastoral scenes in question, was taken over bodily by Shakespeare from Greene's romance *Dorastus and Fawnia*; but as in these pastoral scenes Greene was clearly inspired by Feliciano de Silva, Shakespeare incurs at least a second-hand indebtedness to *Amadis de Grecia*. There the matter might have been allowed to rest if Shakespeare, in altering the names of Greene's characters, had not reverted to the Spanish original (Florisel) in the case of Prince Florizel. Shakespeare must have known something about the relationship of Greene's *Dorastus and Fawnia* to *Amadis de Grecia*. Did he learn the name of Dorastus' prototype from better informed friends, or had he himself read *Amadis de Grecia*, which he might have done in the French version? In the latter case, did he confine himself to the change in the name, or did he borrow further from the Spanish romance? Southey prudently spoke of nothing more than imitation. Later writers have followed up the clue, none with greater zeal than Dr. Perott, who examined not only the few end-chapters of *Amadis de Grecia* devoted to Prince Florizel's birth and pastoral adventures, but also all the books of the *Amadis* series written by Feliciano de Silva. Besides the name Florisel, Dr. Perott points out that these books contain a bear-hunt, a genial thieving rascal, and statues called to life, all missing in Greene's romance, and he concludes that the conjunction of these in *The Winter's Tale* must be attributed to the direct influence of Feliciano de Silva. His conclusion is convincing; but the conviction is almost completely destroyed by the proofs on which the conclusion is based. Let us examine them briefly.

The bear-hunt selected by Dr. Perott is to be found in *Lisuarte de Grecia*, the seventh book of the *Amadis* romances. The Florisel episode occurs in the final chapters of the ninth book, *Amadis de Grecia*, and assuming that Shakespeare was incapable of deciding how to get rid of Antigonus without some literary precedent, he might have found it in the bear-hunt which is described in



these very chapters. Dr. Perott convinces himself that the bear-hunt in *Lisuarte de Grecia* inspired Shakespeare, because in this case the hunters in their pursuit hear 'a sad lament from a part of the mountain side washed by the sea', which is reproduced in the clown's 'O, the most piteous cry of the poor souls!' in *The Winter's Tale*. Shakespeare apparently would never have thought of making his clown utter a human cry of sympathy with shipwrecked souls unless he had read of a distressed damsel's cry for help under totally different circumstances in a chivalresque romance.

The incident of the 'statues called to life' which Dr. Perott finds 'united with' the pastoral motive also occurs in *Lisuarte de Grecia*. A princely pair were suddenly turned to marble by enchantment. A few years later they were just as suddenly restored to life, with the drawback that they could neither eat nor talk. These disadvantages could only be removed by two perfectly faithful lovers, which leads to numerous 'adventures' in a society that had departed from the high moral standard set by Amadis of Gaul. It is only by obscuring the details that this incident can be passed off as having inspired the method of Hermione's restoration in *The Winter's Tale*.

The case of the thieving rascal is somewhat different. It is not altogether impossible that Shakespeare should have taken the barest of hints for his Autolycus from Feliciano de Silva. The rascal in question, known as El Fraudador, is indeed a mounted horse-thief by profession, but he is somewhat similar in conception to Autolycus. Dr. Perott, however, is not content with vague resemblances, and strains proofs to the breaking-point to establish a close relationship between the two. He retells one of El Fraudador's tricks which Autolycus is said to have copied. A noble damsel tells a knight she meets that her brother is wounded, and begs for his help. The knight follows her to the wounded man, sets him on his horse, and gets on a tree-stump to mount behind him; but the wounded man, who is El Fraudador, and not wounded at all, rides away with the knight's horse, exhorting him to preach

a sermon from the improvised pulpit. Autolycus, it will be remembered, pretends that he has been beaten and robbed, and picks the pocket of the clown that helps him up. The pick-pocket pedlar is the more natural of the two rogues. Shakespeare may well have met him and his tricks at Stratford fairs and Warwickshire harvest-wakes; he is the less likely to have copied this incident from the Spanish romance as the book in which it is told was written out of the proper sequence, and apparently for that reason was not translated into any language. We should have to assume that Shakespeare read it in the original. This presents no difficulty to Dr. Perott, who supplies from it further convincing details: El Fraudador plays tricks on emperors and queens, yet regards himself as a true vassal, and helps on the occasion of a war, just as Autolycus, a former servant of Florizel, helps him later; both El Fraudador and Autolycus change their dress; each swindles people after warning them against himself. A single example will discover how Dr. Perott achieves this close and unnecessary parallel. On one occasion, El Fraudador, being pursued by his victims, changes dress to avoid discovery. Autolycus is persuaded to change clothes with Florizel in order that the latter may escape in disguise. The circumstances are entirely different; the only thing in common is the mere changing dress. Dr. Perott, by stripping off their leaves, would persuade us that an English oak were own brother to a Lombardy poplar. He realizes that isolated incidents which have little or no evidential value in themselves may acquire a convincing force in accumulation; he has not realized that there is all the difference in the world between the corresponding sequence of parallel events, essential and unessential, in two similar stories, which proves the relationship of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* to Montemôr's *Diana*, and the fortuitous gathering of scattered incidents torn from their contexts in the different books of a long series for comparison with isolated incidents in a totally different story. The very accumulation of proof which convinces Dr. Perott will tempt others impatiently to reject his thesis. Yet one

point has escaped him which, had he noticed it, he would regard as proving that thesis beyond all doubt. Shakespeare's prince bears the same name as the hero of one of these *Amadis* romances; the hero of a later romance, in which *El Fraudador* occurs, is Rogel de Grecia. It may be mere coincidence that the gentleman in *The Winter's Tale* who brings the news that 'the oracle is fulfilled, the king's daughter is found', is called Rogero; but the fact is disconcerting to those who would reject Shakespeare's direct indebtedness to Feliciano de Silva.

Dr. Perott would even increase this indebtedness. He thinks that Shakespeare took the plot of *Love's Labour's Lost* from the last of Feliciano de Silva's romances, which was never translated. His abridged version stresses the points which prove Shakespeare's borrowing: an academy; an embassy; the parting of the sexes; a queen accused of violating this (caricatured by Shakespeare in the Armado-Costard-Jaquenetta episode); encounters of knights with masked ladies, and surprises on unmasking; changing of clothes; music played by Ethiopian girls; famous worthies, such as Hector, Achilles, Helen, and Polyxena, called up by magicians for the diversion of the princes. Even the abridgement of the suggested source makes it clear that if Shakespeare extracted *Love's Labour's Lost* from this entangled story of knights and magicians, he deserves greater credit than if he drew it from his own imagination. But Dr. Perott convinces himself by a subtle test, which shows that he has entered into the spirit of the play, and is young enough to 'climb over the house to unlock the little gate'. In the Spanish romance the sexes are kept a third of an hour apart; in *Love's Labour's Lost*, one mile apart. Dr. Perott soberly consulted Minsheu's Dictionary 's.v. *legua*' to discover that 'an English mile is the equivalent of one-third of an hour'! After this, it need surprise no one to find him suggesting that Shakespeare possibly utilized phrases from two of Feliciano de Silva's romances in *The Tempest* and *King Lear*.

The question of Shakespeare's borrowing from Feliciano de Silva perhaps hardly merits such a lengthy discussion,



for at the most it is only pretended that he took but a few hints from the Spanish writer. Attempts have recently been made to show that he was more deeply indebted to a smaller series of these Spanish romances, the *Espejo de Principes y Cavalleros*, a late and handy compendium of sixteenth-century chivalresque nonsense, which was translated into English as *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood*. The early books appeared when Shakespeare was a young man, and may have formed part of his youthful reading; the later books, with reprints of the earlier ones, came out during the period of his literary activity. The series was popular in England, and Shakespeare seems to have been familiar with it, for there is an apparent allusion to its principal hero, the Cavallero del Febo, in Falstaff's reproach of the prince: 'Indeed, you come near me now, Hal; for we that take purses go by the moon, and not by Phoebus, he "that wandering knight so fair".'

Following no doubt the clue afforded by this allusion, Dr. Perott set out to find the original from which Shakespeare drew the plot of *The Tempest*. Hitherto the honour of providing this source had been doubtfully conceded, since Edmund Dorer's time, to Antonio de Eslava's *Noches de Invierno*, a collection of tales published only a year or so before *The Tempest* was written, and not then available in any known translation. For this and other reasons scholars have sought a common source for *The Tempest* and the story from the *Noches de Invierno* that has been associated with it. Dr. Perott discovered this common source in *The Mirror of Knighthood*. I have printed elsewhere a summary of the main theme from this romance, 'ending with two happy marriages', which he published in 1905 as 'the probable source of the plot of Shakespeare's *Tempest*', and I described it as not very convincing. On reconsideration, I am as willing to accept it for the original plot of *Much Ado about Nothing*, which also 'ends with two happy marriages', as of *The Tempest*, and I need not burden you with it here. But Dr. Perott supplemented this main theme with two other matters more suggestive of *The Tempest*. The first is the story of a prince who

devoted himself to magic instead of to government, and after his wife's death retired to an island with his two children, a boy and a girl; the latter when grown up falls in love with the picture of a renowned knight whom the father kidnaps to keep her company. The second is the description of the island of Artimaga, named after its mistress, an old witch who worshipped the devil, and through his agency had a son, her successor from birth; the hero of the romance reaches this island after a dreadful storm, and has adventures which need not be recounted, as they bear no relationship to *The Tempest*. There are, however, precedents for other Shakespearian details. 'To the magician disarming there is an approach in *The Mirror of Knighthood*', and there are besides 'boats (often moved by magic power); storms (often conjured up by magicians); taking away a book from a magician in order to deprive him of his power; phantoms; mighty structures swallowed up; buffetting against the waves; Milon caught by a split oak; the sage waiting on people without being seen.'

Dr. Perott subsequently realized that the princely magician in *The Mirror of Knighthood* was not the elder son driven from his kingdom by a usurping younger brother, but himself a younger son who retired from public life as having no interest in the succession. The story summarized above hereby loses much of its resemblance to *The Tempest*, but Dr. Perott felt adequately compensated for this by a truly remarkable parallel: just as the kidnapped knight—who is really an emperor—stays twenty years in the magic island, so Prospero reveals his story to Miranda after a lapse of twelve years. And there are equally convincing parallels connected with the Devil's Island, which was uninhabited, but full of mysterious fires and smoke and noises: just as in *The Mirror of Knighthood* the monster Fauno was brought there from Mount Atlas, so Sycorax was transported from Algiers to the island in *The Tempest*; and just as a Spanish ship in *The Mirror of Knighthood* has a captain, so the English ship in *The Tempest* has a boatswain.

And if these parallels are not sufficient evidence of Shakespeare's borrowings, there are linguistic proofs to support them. Dr. Perott had already claimed in 1905 that 'two of the finest flowers in Miranda's wreath' had been 'culled in a Spanish garden', by which he meant that prosaic phrases in *The Mirror of Knighthood* blossomed forth into the well-known passages in *The Tempest* beginning: 'O, I have suffer'd with those I saw suffer', and 'For several virtues have I liked several women'. To these he added later the even better known passage:

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep;

and about the same time he printed a list of thirteen parallel passages which reveal Shakespeare's 'verbal borrowings' from *The Mirror of Knighthood* 'in the protasis-scene of *The Tempest*'. From the suggested original 'the chariot took landing', the verbal borrowing in Ariel's 'the king's son have I landed by himself' is limited, if I am not mistaken, to the word 'the', probably as common in Shakespeare's time as now; but it is perhaps uncharitable to assume that Dr. Perott means what he says, and we should no doubt understand that Shakespeare in such cases only borrowed the general idea. Yet what idea was it that he borrowed in the above, or in the following typical examples?

|                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| The forward ship arrived  | Here in this island we |
| in a faire and delectable | arrived.               |
| island.                   |                        |

|                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| The Emperor's ship rushed | How came we ashore? |
| on the shore.             |                     |

Shakespeare's language could not be simpler, and the entire absence of any characteristic words or phrases proves exactly the opposite of what Dr. Perott would have us believe. We are simply dealing with two authors who describe in their own words the commonplace events of the same simple theme—in this case the arrival of a ship at an island. With such 'verbal borrowings' as Dr. Perott adduces, aided by his method of selecting and piecing



together scattered incidents for comparison, one could just as easily prove that *Robinson Crusoe* or *Treasure Island*, for instance, was derived from *The Mirror of Knighthood*.

It is pleasant to turn from the scholar's reconstruction of the workings of a great creator's mind to Mr. Kipling's brilliant theory of *How Shakespeare came to write The Tempest*—and Mr. Kipling, though he modestly proclaims himself no Shakespeare scholar, has some title to speak on the point. Here we see *The Tempest* brewing from such a small beginning as the chatter of a half-tipsy sailor. Shakespeare overhears him discoursing to his neighbour in the theatre of a grievous wreck in the Bermudas. A hint from the distressed mariner is followed by a drink in an adjacent tavern and a more minute description of the island scene of the wreck, so faithfully reproduced in *The Tempest* that Mr. Kipling at once recognized the very spot three hundred years afterwards. With the sailor dipping to a deeper drunkenness, the story became more graphic: discipline had melted under the strain, and some of the revolted crew learned what it meant to wander without officers on a devil-haunted beach of noises. By the time the sailor was without reservation drunk, Shakespeare had quite sanely and normally come by the setting and some of the incidents of *The Tempest*, and his informant was ripe for immortalization as the drunken butler Stephano. Some vaguely remembered story of Italy was encased in the setting so naturally acquired; and in this connexion it is curious to find Mr. Kipling reviving the old heresy of *The History of Aurelio and Isabella*: his library was not sufficiently up to date to suggest Eslava's *Noches de Invierno*, much less *The Mirror of Knighthood*.

Dr. Perott is not content merely to refer *The Tempest* to this latter. He finds in it the inspiration for ideas and incidents in several other plays. In some cases indeed he appears to offer us nothing more than parallels, but we feel all the time that he implies more than he actually states. The most plausible of his suggestions—though I can accept none of them—is that Margaret's impersonation

of Hero in *Much Ado about Nothing* was copied directly from *The Mirror of Knighthood*, rather than from other available sources; but I have dealt with this elsewhere, and need not trouble you with it here. Nor is it necessary for me at this stage to do more than enumerate the other supposed borrowings from this romance: the pursuit of their lovers by ladies disguised as pages in *Twelfth Night*; the kidnapping of the children and their training as warriors in *Cymbeline*; the dagger-incident in the wooing-scene in *King Richard III*; the drowning-scene, and even the phrase 'the adventurous knight', in *Hamlet*; the brook-simile in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

The very number of these suggested borrowings, combined with their distribution, is against them. If they were individually true, their collective value would be sufficient to disprove their individual truth, which is absurd, but not more so than the picture of Shakespeare which Dr. Perott suggests to us. Here the great philosophical dramatist appears little better than a scissors-and-paste artist. Like Don Quixote in his study, Shakespeare is surrounded by Spanish romances of chivalry; some of them are constantly open on his table throughout his literary career, and he dips into them for inspiration when at a loss for a plot, an incident, a phrase, or even an epithet. The most confirmed Hispanophile will hardly welcome this ponderous portrait, and will turn with relief to Mr. Kipling's quick sketch of a human Shakespeare wheedling information from a drunken sailor. Mr. Kipling at least sees his subject in proper focus.

Source-hunting is a necessary evil: some of my own worst moments have been devoted to this degrading sport, with insignificant and, I trust, harmless results. The discovery of literary sources may alter our estimate of an author, and where more than one country is involved, any ascertained facts are of interest for the interrelation of literatures. It can hardly be claimed that our estimate of Shakespeare will be affected by new discoveries as to his sources; his indebtedness—both actual and possible—to his predecessors in one country or another has already

been fully discounted; any new facts will derive their importance mainly from their exalted association. Of late years Shakespeare's possible Spanish sources have been diligently investigated, with but little result; indeed, many of the 'discoveries' dealt with above may seem hardly worthy of serious treatment. Yet they were made by responsible people in reputable publications. Most of them are stated as unquestionable facts, with proofs often depending on very rare—to most people inaccessible—books. Some which are merely put forward as suggestions have been taken over in abstract by other publications and represented as facts. Readers who have not access to the originals quoted, or who have not the arguments before them, are likely to accept the 'discoveries' as proved facts, on the authority of the persons and the periodicals that print them. It was in the interests of such readers, among others, that the present examination of the results of recent investigations was developed.

It would have been gratifying to Spaniards and to Hispanophiles to find that Shakespeare incurred a heavier debt to Spain than we are warranted in acknowledging. It would have been a pleasure to me to enhance, rather than to depreciate, his indebtedness; yet a vain pleasure may be sacrificed without regret for the satisfaction of being on the side of truth. And after all, we have little reason to be dissatisfied with the truth in this matter. The sixteenth century was a period of Italian and French influence in England: Shakespeare himself illustrates this fact. The period of Spanish influence in England, especially in the drama, was still to come. Yet at various points we can bring Shakespeare into relationship, direct or indirect, with Spanish literature. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* owes something to Montemôr's *Diana*, and *The Winter's Tale* to *Amadis de Grecia*. *The Tempest* is at any rate related to Eslava's *Noches de Invierno*, even if Shakespeare knew nothing of the Spanish book. His apparent allusion to *The Mirror of Knighthood* may warrant the suspicion that he read, and perhaps utilized, that romance; and we may at least speculate as to whether he



came under the influence of Cervantes and the *Celestina*. Some may entertain favourably a few more of the suggestions discussed above. But our speculations must be controlled by common sense. We must not consider supposed Spanish originals so closely that we fail to see their relation to general literature. We must not rashly detect a borrowing when we find two writers using a commonplace idea in different (or even in similar) surroundings. We must not all too hastily conclude that a creative artist is incapable of creating. The proverb 'there is nothing new under the sun' is to be interpreted as meaning that the same idea often occurs independently to different people at different times; we must not assume that, because we find it in a great writer's work, this great writer necessarily took it from an earlier (and usually very inferior) writer, simply because we can trace it back so far, and no farther. In short, we must obey a code of rules which can easily be compiled by observing those broken in most of the assertions or suggestions of literary borrowing we have been discussing.

Guided by such rules, we may expect small and indecisive results, where in any case the field is limited. Even as a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, Shakespeare was usually artistic enough to cover up his tracks, and while we may frequently suspect, we cannot often bring his borrowings home to him. He himself warns us that it is useless to pry too curiously. Like his own creation Holofernes, he has an 'extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions: these are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of *pia mater*, and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion'.

We may well be content to praise the Lord for men in whom these gifts are acute, even as Nathaniel did. Certainly those who have gone out of their way to tamper indiscreetly with Shakespeare's intellectual remains seem justly to have fallen under the curse he laid on such as should move his bones.







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